

QUOTES FROM SPOKESPERSONS ON FOUNDATION 500-LIST:

“The entrepreneur is the hero of our time, and it is estimated that over the coming years over 1 billion women will enter the workforce – a majority through entrepreneurship. But, you can’t be what you can’t see. Women rarely make the covers of business magazines, in fact the last time a woman was on the cover of Fortune Magazine was October 2014. With the Foundation 500 list we want to re-define what a business leader looks like,” says **Diana Amini, Global Manager at H&M Foundation.**

“During 2014-2020, H&M Foundation pledges 120 million Swedish krona (\$14 million/€12 million) to support over 200,000 women entrepreneurs from emerging markets with seed capital and skills training to start and expand their businesses. If the world is to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals on Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality, the time to act is now,” says **Karl-Johan Persson, Board member H&M Foundation and CEO H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB.**

“Born with zero privilege, the women portrayed in the Foundation 500 list have made their own fortunes in the harshest of startup-environments. Yet, their stories often go untold. I wish I had seen women like these on the cover of business magazines when I grew up in South Sudan,” said **Alek Wek, British/Sudanese Supermodel, Entrepreneur and H&M Foundation Ambassador.**

“The Foundation 500 list was created because we want to highlight the successes of women entrepreneurs from low-income communities. These women are paving the way and changing mindsets of what a business leader can look like, which inspires other women to develop their own business. This is an important step towards gender equality, while it lifts people and communities out of poverty,” says **Reintje van Haeringen, Programme Manager Women Empowerment & Business Development.**

“I was struck by the enthusiasm and empowerment that having your own business brings to a person’s overall being. It also strengthened my long-standing belief that if you empower women you empower an entire country,” says **Malin Fezehai, Swedish/Eritrean, New York based Photographer.**

“I wanted to redefine the image of the typical idea of the businesswoman, and show their strength. Having your own income makes a person feel proud, and gives a sense of achievement. I wanted to create images that communicate empowerment,” says **Malin Fezehai, Swedish/Eritrean, New York based Photographer.**

Foundation 500 is an initiative by the non-profit H&M Foundation and humanitarian agency CARE. By gathering portraits and stories of entrepreneurs enrolled in its Global Program on Empowerment of Women, the Foundation 500 is an all-female list of entrepreneurs in emerging markets. Empowering women is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty and create economic growth in societies at large. The list includes 500 women from 11 countries portrayed in the style most often used when portraying male business leaders: strong, confident – in power-positions. The H&M Foundation is privately funded by the Stefan Persson family, founders and the main owners of H&M. It’s an independent legal entity operating beyond the company’s value chain with its own staff, strategy and board. Since 2013, the family has donated 1.3 billion Swedish krona (\$177 million/€144 million) to drive positive change on a global scale. For further information, please visit www.foundation500.com and <http://hmfoundation.com>.